

***Carex tenuiflora* Wahlenb.**

sparse-leaved sedge

Cyperaceae (Sedge Family)

**Status:** State Threatened

**Rank:** G5S1

**General Description:** The plant is loosely caespitose (tufted) from long, slender, yellowish-brown rhizomes; the culms are scabrous (rough), firm, arching 8-12 inches long; the leaves are grayish-green, 0.5-2 mm broad, soft, shorter than the culm; the spikes (usually 3) are subglobose, bractless, densely compressed, with staminate flowers above; the scales are blunt and yellowish-white; the perigynia are green, ellipsoid, beakless and finely puncticulate.

**Identification Tips:** The most distinctive feature is the three small spikes bunched at the tip of the slender stem.

**Phenology:** Plants flower in July and seeds are ripe by mid-August.

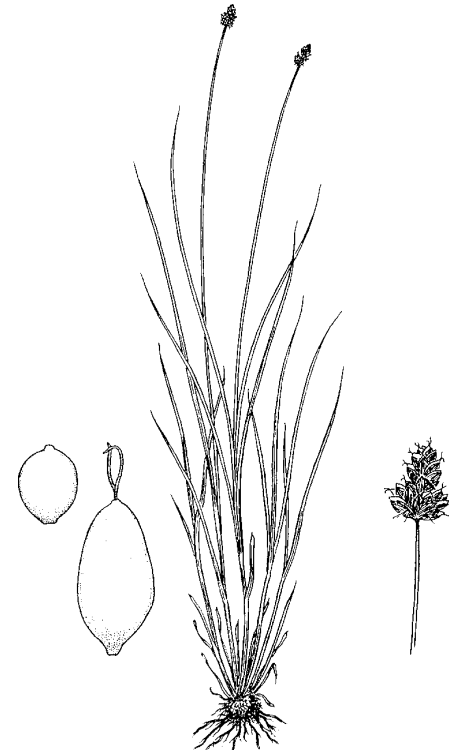
**Range:** Circumboreal, from Alaska to Newfoundland, south to Washington, Alberta, Minnesota, Michigan and Maine. In WA, it is known from the Okanogan Highlands physiographic province.

**Habitat:** Bogs, fens, swamps, wet grassy areas, occasionally in seepage areas in forests. In WA, *C. tenuiflora* occurs in a sedge marsh and sphagnum bog maintained by a beaver dam. Associated species include bur-reed (*Sparganium minimum*), northwest mannagrass (*Calamagrostis canadensis*), bristle-stalked sedge (*Carex leptalea*), common buckbean (*Menyanthes trifoliata*), pondweed (*Potamogeton* sp.), marsh cinquefoil (*Potentilla palustris*), crowberry (*Empetrum nigrum*), willow (*Salix* sp.), bog Labrador-tea (*Ledum groenlandicum*), and common juniper (*Juniperus communis*).

**Ecology:** The species is a wetland obligate and is dependent upon maintenance of the hydrologic regime. As noted above, beaver activity is important in the maintenance of the known site in WA.

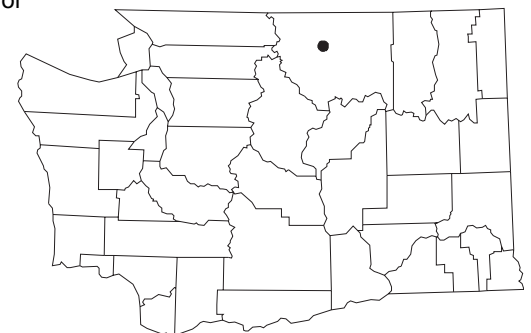
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Known distribution of  
*Carex tenuiflora*  
in Washington



● Current (1980+)

○ Historic (older than 1980)

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Dana Visalli



Dana Visalli

***Carex tenuiflora***

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**State Status Comments:** Disjunct in Washington. Only recently discovered to occur in the state.

**Inventory Needs:** Little to no inventory for this species has been conducted in WA. Appropriate habitats across the northern portion of WA, from Okanogan to Pend Oreille counties, should be systematically inventoried.

**Threats and Management Concerns:** Land use activities that would impact the hydrologic regime are of concern. Such activities could include timber harvest and road construction. Peat mining is of potential concern. Grazing could have an impact through the additional nutrient load to the water.

**References:**

Taylor, T.M.C. 1983. *The Sedge Family of British Columbia*. British Columbia Provincial Museum Handbook 43. 375 pp.

Britton, N.L., and H.A. Brown. 1970. *An Illustrated Flora of the Northern United States and Canada: Volume I (Ferns to Buckwheat)*. Dover Publications, Inc., New York. 680 pp.

Hulten, Eric. 1968. *Flora of Alaska and Neighboring Territories, A Manual of the Vascular Plants*. Stanford University Press, Stanford, CA. 1008 pp.